

the Circle

WINTER 1981

the Circle

Front Cover by Haynes Atkins

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Features

Southern Parades	4
<i>by Mark J. Skoneki</i>	
The Breath of Intention	9
<i>by Louis Lusk</i>	
Taking the Ticket: Campus parking and its problems	12
<i>by Sonny Long and Beth Dees</i>	
Proration: No One's Pleasure, Everyone's Pain	17
<i>by Beth Johnson and Steve Farish</i>	
Proxima Civilaris	24
<i>by Jimmy Sailors</i>	
Wings of Winter	28
<i>by P. S. O'Gwynn and Bryan Pierce</i>	
Start up the Ferris Wheel	34
<i>by Tim Dorsey</i>	

Poetry, photography and artwork throughout issue

The Inner Circle

When Beth Holman, who was the original *Circle* editor chosen by the Communications Board last Spring had to resign her position and drop out of school because of her injured ankle, I was sorry for her but I must admit that I was elated that I would have the chance to be editor for the first issue. This intense excitement stayed with me until the next morning when I awoke and asked myself, "What do you know about being an editor?" But by this time Holman had reached her home in Elloree, South Carolina, and it was too late to tell anyone that actually I knew very little.

Anyway after a few days of emotional highs and lows, I regained my balance when I came to the realization that a magazine does not belong to, and is not the entire responsibility of the editor, but rather it is the end result of an enthusiastic staff, working along with a competent and encouraging editorial board on a batch of good submissions. So I relaxed and settled down to asking questions, working on deadlines and walking up and down the concourse in front of Haley Center, encouraging submissions from friends and strangers alike.

This issue won't be the same as last year, because students change even year by year. However the purpose of the magazine remains the same as when Thom Botsford was the *Circle's* first editor. And that is to pub-

lish a flavorful magazine that evokes pleasure and perhaps provokes controversy for its student readers.

Hope you enjoy it.

Beth J. Dees
Editor

A Note On Style

The variety of approaches to writing and design in this issue reflects the *Circle's* function as a laboratory publication. Although each piece was reviewed by staff members and representatives of the Editorial Board, the appearance of any article, story, poem, drawing, or photograph does not necessarily indicate unanimous critical approval.

The Circle wishes to thank all the students and faculty members whose help made this issue possible.

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Southern Parades

by Mark J. Skoneki

"It was more a carnival than a hate march—more a festival than a Klan rally,"

Ten people were felled at the Klan march and rally, confirming the fears of many Montgomery residents. Yet it wasn't violence that struck these people

etching by Randy Davis

down, only the comparatively mild misfortune of heat. The Invisible Empire, Knights of the Klu Klux Klan, marched through the heart of Montgomery on a horrendously hot August day of 1980. I was there, an intern for *The Montgomery Advertiser*.

There's a persistent fear of the Klan, in all its factions. The roots of this fear no doubt, are in the past, but each town in which a march takes place must wonder if or when violence could erupt again. Two summers ago, Montgomery was apprehensive when the Invisible Empire tried to retrace Martin Luther King's Selma to Montgomery march. The city police turned the Klansmen back at the city limits and arrested many

of them. The Klan had failed to obtain a marching permit.

It got that permit for the summer of 1980. The restrictions were strict—no weapons—and security was incredible. Some 200 law enforcement officers—city, county and state—escorted the Klan through the city. The law came on wheels (about 100 vehicles) and in the air (two helicopters). Each marcher, including the journalists who chose to make the 8-mile hike, submitted to a personal search. Once someone began the march, he could not leave the line and return.

Advertiser Staff Writer Tom Gardner was covering the march for the paper and I was assigned to help him. I spent

the week before the march wondering if I were scared or just excited at the prospect. I never really did decide which. We arrived at the starting point on the Selma highway about 10 that humid, hot morning. It must have been 90 degrees already. It would be nearly 100 before the day was through. Ironically, all the police protection afforded was probably not necessary, since the expected Klan crowd (expected, that is, by KKK leaders) of 2,000 became a mere 100 when marching day arrived. Most drove in from North Alabama or Tennessee.

Tom and I started to mingle with the marchers before things started. Most were unwilling to talk, on the grounds that the media had distorted their intentions. Tom found a young blond man who spoke of reverse discrimination against the whites. I found a younger man, about 19. He seemed shy, and I didn't think he'd talk to me, but I decided to give it a try. A construction worker, he dressed in jeans and a tee-shirt, like so many of the middle class from which he sprang.

I said hello and identified myself.

"Why did you join the Klan?" I asked the obvious question.

"I don't know exactly . . . I guess it was because I lost my job."

"I hope your sister marries a nigger!" a marcher yelled.

He later admitted he'd lost his job to a black man, a man he thought was less qualified to do the work. He didn't seem bitter—just sad.

This appears to be a reasonable man, I said to myself. Growing bold, I asked him about the violent history of the KKK and the fear its white sheets still produced. "We're not violent any more," he said "and the sheets are just a symbol of our heritage. True, the hoods no longer conceal the faces of the members

of the Invisible Empire." Good answer, I thought to myself.

Wandering around some more, I was amazed at the people around me. There were women—lots of them—and children. It was more a carnival than a hate march—more a festival than a Klan rally.

The police began their searches of Klanspeople about noon. The temperature was now in the mid 90s, and sweat shone on everyone's face. I hadn't planned to actually march with these people, but I decided at the last minute to do so. I grudgingly let an officer frisk me and then run a metal detector across my body. Each marcher went through this ritual and was led to an area surrounded by officer blue. No guns or weapons were found. After 30 minutes, we started. We walked along the Old Selma Highway, much the same path that Dr. King walked nearly 20 years before on his. The route would take us to the Southern Boulevard, then down Norman Bridge Road to the State Capitol. On the steps of Alabama's center of government, Imperial Wizard Bill Wilkinson would speak. Wilkinson was dressed in a white robe—his face in plain view. He looked like a neighbor, someone who held cookouts in his backyard—not the leader of a hate group.

Mayor Emory Flomar led the way, surrounded by several men whom I assumed were Special Weapons and Tactics officers (an assumption based on their automatic rifles). Wilkinson followed close behind, accompanied by army-green clad marchers, whom one Klansman said were a security unit.

Perhaps it was the heat or the police or the era that prevented any violent clashes. It certainly wasn't the Klan marchers or most of the spectators they passed. A Klansman dressed in black led the cheer: "What do we want? White Power!" Many blacks responded angrily with shouts. The Klan only chanted faster. As the heat became even more unbearable, a marching radio broadcaster whispered to me her own version of the Klan cheer: "What do we want? A thundershower!"

Each step was more painful than the last. I carried a canteen, sharing it with whoever asked. Water trucks were available every few hundred yards or so,

and the marchers were allowed to rest at designated areas, but the sun still heat on the walkers, sapping their strength. Many of those who fainted because of heat exhaustion were police officers who wore dark uniforms and riot control helmets. Even before the march, one had collapsed behind the Wizard as Wilkinson spoke briefly to his faithful. The officer, obviously disoriented, came up swinging when someone tried to help him. He was calmed, but many Klansmen began to jeer. This only served to build tension.

A young white boy rode on a bicycle past the marchers. Feeling a little brave behind his police insulation, he called

"We're not violent anymore," he said, "and the sheets are just a symbol of our heritage."

out to a marcher carrying the United States' flag: "Hey, mister, why are you carrying that flag? You don't deserve it!" There was a moment of death-like silence. Finally, another marcher yelled back at him, "I hope your sister marries a nigger!" Even some of the Klansmen seemed embarrassed by that remark.

"We thought we'd take a more scenic route," was the mayor's explanation when the march took a sudden turn off the planned street. The city had arranged several routes to the Capitol, apparently fearing a head-on confrontation with an organized counterforce. There were indeed rumors of a large group of angry blacks waiting at the end of Norman Bridge Road.

Despite all the attention and the money spent, in some respects, the march seemed little more than a Sunday stroll through town to most of its participants. Only a few wore robes and most robes were discarded after a few hundred yards because of the heat. They talked

about home, family, the kids—everything it seemed that “normal people” talk about. Yet the police, the media and the crowds that followed this small band, solidified their radical image. I almost wanted to tell everyone to go home. Tell everyone to ignore this childish demonstration. I wanted to be the first to leave.

Nobody did go home, of course. The march was news—to the public and the press. Wilkinson and his followers made the front pages and were lead stories on radio and television. The press had to cover it, it involved too much money

and manpower to be brushed aside. Yet one of us wanted to report what we saw. None of us could fully understand it.

White-robed Wilkinson talked of segregation on the Capitol steps. “For nearly 2,000 years the churches preached segregation,” he said. “The last 20 years they’ve started to preach desegregation. You’re not going to tell me the church was wrong all that time.” About 500 curious people witnessed Wilkinson’s words. Many cheered him on.

Almost every rational being must feel a little queasy when dealing with the Klan. It reminds us of a violent past and

a human ugliness. Yet the Klan continues to exist and even grow. Does it mean a return to our era of hatred? Or are they a legitimate political and peaceful organization? Perhaps our immediate future will give us some indication of which. For now, The Invisible Empire managed to behave itself. Perhaps it suggests a new Klan that will not perpetrate racial stereotypes. Yet, this faction recently opened a “commando school” in Cullman, Ala. Maybe they want to lull America into believing they’re peaceful.



...awashed in illusion?

You touch me now
as lightly as your paintbrush
skims softly across
a precious watercolor

Your emotions are
faint traces of color
deluged by the storm
of your past feelings—

I care too much about you
to let this moment pass
only as a scene to be
filed away in your portfolio...

—Ruth E. Schowalter

What happens to all the worlds that
were never built?—all the bright
futures that never came,
lying like unopened
wedding gifts in
musty bedrooms.

—W. David Owen



print by Tom Causland

GREAT-GRANDFATHER

I was raised under yankee guns,
Or so my great-grandfather thought,
Especially in his senile evenings
Of my childhood when the sun
Cast its last rays on the wideboard
Floors and the lurking enemy
Were crouched in the darkening hills.
I stiffened at the invasion
Of memories that overflowed his
Generous heart and threw the room
Into wild account of valour, destruction.
Unceasingly their numbers came, hordes,
Bearing fire I saw in his ancient eyes.
He could not fathom why they
Destroyed his once beloved world,
But his bitterness would pass.
He was again grand stories, a wide smile.
Yankees own everything he would say
From the porch watching cars rush by.

He was solemn in his casket.
I put death in its proper place,
Running back to my world of the young.
Some days later in a field, smoke
And wine dazed friends and I
As electric music burned through
The mild spring air and suddenly
My great-grandfather's voice drowned
Everything.

—Percy Jones



drawing by Wayne Brown

FRONT PORCHES

Front porches were made for sittin'
For shuckin' the corn, or doin' the knittin'.
For gazing into the open spaces
And wonderin' about those far-off places.
For catchin' a breeze, or takin' a nap—
Or restin' your knees and chawin' the sap.
For watchin' the sprinkler go round and round,
Or hearing the robin's sing-song sound.
For watchin' the cars as they putter by,
For comforting heartbreak's lowly cry.
For talkin' of girls and special things
And the peace of mind the springtime brings.
For pondering the sun as it slowly sets
Debating the catch of the casting nets.
Yes, front porches serve many a function
Soothing soul and mind as a powerful unction.

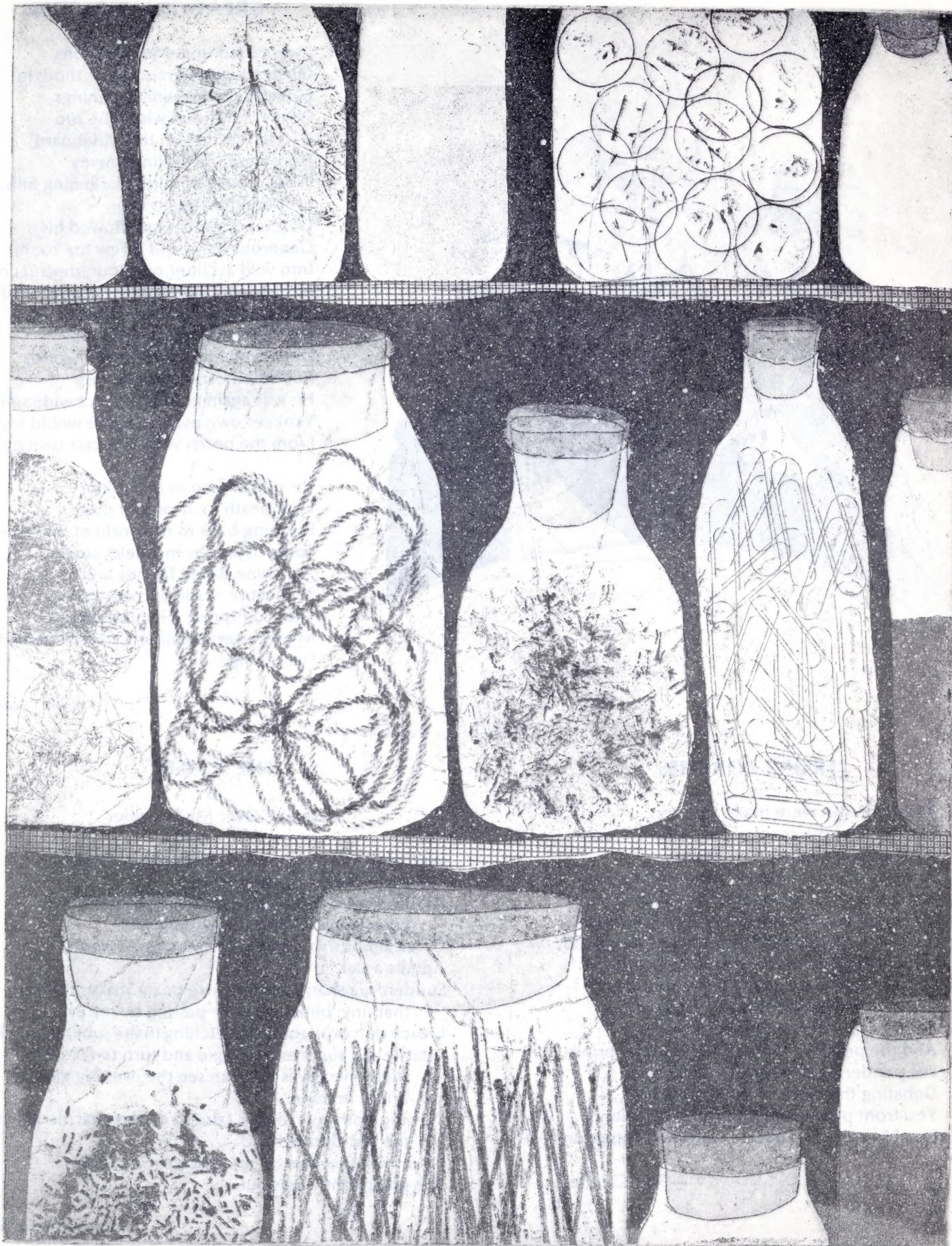
—Britt Cauthen

THE SUNSET

or
Selene Over My Shoulder

Watching a cool, grave sunset from a lofty height,
I turn my cheek to feel the fire.
Subtle, fierce, and volatile, cunning grey rays are
crawling in toward the waning sun.
Ceremoniously nodding to Night, great Helios
Admits a star.
Suddenly, a sharp, golden-wire beam strikes out from
that tiny, blinking soul—passing by my eye.
I reach out, exultant and stretching in the sublimating sky.
I startle at a suppressed giggle and turn to face two
frightened eyes that can see the evening glowing
bright in mine.
Turning from my vantage, I drop a cold crystal marble into
the red-tipped hand.
“Run with the stars,” I say with a secret smile.
The great light winks out.

—Lisa W. Peacock



etching by Meredith J. Rushing

The Breath of Intention

by Louis Lusk

She had been absent from the couch for almost ten minutes, yet the sweet scent of her perfume was still quietly sitting next to me.

"Do you mind if I go upstairs and finish getting ready?" she had asked.

"As a matter of fact I do," I had said.

"Thanks. I'll just be a minute," she had replied immediately, apparently oblivious to attempt at playful sarcasm.

I heard coming from upstairs a prolonged spraying noise, followed by two dainty coughs, the second one heard from a shorter range, as she was approaching the top of the staircase. The top step creaked, and I watched as she descended the staircase, slowly rotating her hips and torso in supple and seductive synchronization until she reached the couch, whereupon she resumed her place next to me.

Suddenly a strange and powerful scent of hairspray leapt from her head and attacked my aforementioned ten-minute companion, and there were four loud explosions, each explosion followed by a "bless you" from her, the intonation of each "bless you" the same, as if echoes of the four identical blasts from my face. I said the words "hay fever" and regained my composure by crossing my legs, clearing my throat and wiping my hands on my slacks.

"I'm so very sorry that it took me so very long up there and everything," she began, "but you see it's just that it takes me forever to get ready or to do anything at all I mean it's just that . . ." and she carried on in much the same fashion for what seemed an inordinately long period of time, covering numerous aspects of her daily life and the problems involved in such things as taking "fifteen minutes to brush my teeth, for God's sake! It's just that . . ." She began acting out the recurring scenes of her life, becoming animated and histrionic whenever she mimicked her roommate. (Having never met her roommate I did not know how accurate her impersonation, but I doubted that such an impatient and sarcastic individual could exist.) I was beginning to think that she would not stop talking unless someone clasped his hand firmly over her mouth, but suddenly I detected in her tone of voice an approaching closing statement and, sure enough, five minutes later I got one.

"It's all because I'm lazy," she said finally. She then became silent for a moment. A look of contempt crossed her face, and she said scornfully, "And I'm lazy because my mother is." She looked around the room as if to find reassurance from the walls or furniture. Finding nothing there, she turned to me. Our eyes met. (Generally I look at girl's

foreheads, for I am too shy to look into their eyes and I don't find noses particularly attractive. This time, however, my boredom had dulled my memory, and I had forgotten that I was shy.)

"Can that happen?" she asked, "I mean, can that be why I'm lazy?"

"Do you mean is laziness inheritable?"

"Yeah, is it?"

"No," I replied, "but the ability to rationalize certainly is."

I eagerly awaited her reaction to this reply, for I had made what I thought to be a humorous comment. But immediately upon viewing her facial expression I felt as the young lad, in the old story might have felt, who threw a stone into a pond in order to see a splash, only to look on in surprise as the rock deflected off the frozen surface. Likewise, there wasn't a ripple in her frozen face, nor was there any sound. The only movement was that of her eyes, which moved upward, as if she were trying to locate something on the ceiling. Her eyes fell back into place. Now there was only silence.

Two molasses moments oozed by.

Her mouth finally broke the ice, as she said, "anyway, it's just that . . ." and she was still talking when the first guests arrived twenty minutes later.

Actually, the wine and cheese party turned out better than I had expected, until I ran into an old acquaintance whose name was George and whose last name I had either never known or had forgotten. George is the kind of guy who falls into the category of those people who eat the little cubes of pork fat when they eat pork-and-beans. Either one does or one doesn't, and George did. I had seen him do it. Twice. Three cubes in all. It was about 8:30 when I ran into him, and we began engaging in small talk; I was explaining to him my allergic condition to cheese when it happened. I mean The Scene. That is, The Scene began about 8:30 when I was engaging in small talk with George _____, in the middle of the room (small), in the middle of the crowd (large).

". . . and my skin is allergic to dairy products, turnips, intense cold, milk, and . . ." and I saw before my eyes a pitiful sight. The hostess, my date, was choking, apparently on a piece of cheese. My date, the talkative girl with the lazy mother and non-existent roommate, was on the floor on her knees and hands making a strange sound (like the sound of a moose; or a moose-like sound). I quickly ran to her. I knew what I had to do. The Heimlich maneuver. (Approach the choking person from behind, wrap arms around victim's

waist. Take right hand and make it into a fist. Place just below rib cage. Place left hand over fist. Pull back and up forcefully with quick, jerky motions.)

As I began the lifesaving process I suddenly lost touch with the room, the plates of cheese, the empty wine bottles, the coats, the ties, the dresses, the people in the coats and ties and dresses; I became totally oblivious to my environment. I felt un-human; I was a machine, a frenzied apparatus with artificial appendages that were making violent thrusts into the stomach of the choking girl. Out of control, I was going out of control harder and harder faster and faster I thrust I thrust I thrust, I was a fierce unrestrained uninhibited reckless rash breakneck freak, an unheld balloon with the air spewing out but "I've got to get it out get it out that stupid little killer I've got to get that stupid little killer out of her

stupid little throat!" I was a vertical bucking bronco, and the victim/rider was the gasping cowgirl hanging on for dear Life.

(I suppose I should tell you, for the sake of completeness, that this girl loses her contact lenses quite frequently. Also, when this girl laughs she sounds remarkably like a large animal in distress.)

What is important, and what I will remember as long as I breathe, is that on a winter evening at approximately 8:35 while sitting in the middle of a living room floor with a red imprint, the shape of a hand, on my face, I looked around at the roomful of laughing faces and realized for the first time, the subtle difference between a laugh and a choke. I lay on my back and smiled a smile that only humans know.



"HEY" IN B-FLAT

Why "hey" is the first of the ritual concerning exercise class.

(If you boys only knew what being the perfect female involves.

Idealized glamour does not hang in closets tailored for all.)

Visions race through the static bodies anticipating class to begin.

Aspiring beauty motivates group exercise,

all the well-composed young ladies ready to exercise on to a new, exciting lifestyle.

Pink leotards and tights compliment coordinated stripes on socks.

Hair ribbons confine normally flowing, usually-blond hair.

Ironed t-shirts with expressive thoughts all saying the same thing,

cover bodies spaced 18 inches apart with colors paired throughout the room.

Latest make-up techniques and update on campus couples must be postponed once the music begins.

So starts the humbling process.

Exercises really are exercises.

Aerobic dancing does take effort.

Jumping jacks, bend, lunge, stretch, flex, point, leap, stand, relax,

The ladies are gone.

Ducks crowd to the center of the room.

Flamingos gracefully constrict one leg while straining the other.

Crescendo.

Glistening bodies out do themselves,

In the hopes of the instant, perfect end-product.

Bend, twist and smile.

Unwinding are the thirty bodies relaxing on the floor.

Spectrum of wilted tights

like closing umbrellas after a lengthy rain.

The day is over, prepare to bloom tomorrow.

—J. Antonek



etching by Anne Johnson Leech

Taking the Ticket:

Campus parking and its problems

by Sonny Long and Beth Dees

Some things are inevitable, such as death, taxes and parking tickets at Auburn University. Just as sure as final exams come at the end of each quarter, a student placing a D zoned car in a C zoned area or violating any of the other laws set down by the Campus Security Office will find a three by four inch slip of paper tucked beneath his windshield wiper.

"Registering your vehicle does not guarantee you a parking space," said Dr. Ian Hardin, chairman of one University Traffic Appeals Board. "It's more of a hunting permit."

Presently a "hunter's" chance of finding a legal slab of asphalt for his vehicle anywhere on Auburn's campus is only one in two. In detailed figures this means that for approximately 15,000 cars registered, there are fewer than 9,000 places to put them. Last year 61,506 "hunters" were unsuccessful. When asked how much revenue was generated from the payment of the large number of tickets, everyone from the Security Office Chief to the university president's public relations man hesitated to say. (See "Secrets")

"Registering your vehicle does not guarantee you a parking space. It's more of a hunting permit," said Hardin.

After four weeks of telephone calls and unsuccessful interviews *The Circle* finally got a personal interview with the University's business manager, Rhett E. Riley, who released the facts and figures concerning the parking situation. Of the 61,506 tickets issued during the 1979-80

fiscal year only about 27,600 were paid on time. The remaining 16,300 tickets were turned over to the bursar's office to freeze registration of culprits. According to Riley the approximate \$200,000 taken in from parking fines, vehicle registration and parking meters goes directly back into the security department.

"We have a campus security account where ticket violation fines and payment for decals are deposited," said Riley, "to cover operations of the campus security office."

Chief Dawson said, "Several years ago the governor had a committee look into how Auburn spent its money. It decided that the parking department





should be self-supporting. The money goes right back into the operation of the Security Office, including sign maintenance, painting street lines, equipment and parking lot improvement such as resurfacing."

To enforce parking regulations, the Security Office employs one full-time policeman and five students (two not presently in school and three part-time). They enforce zone parking from 7 a.m. until 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. This enforcement begins the first day of final registration and ends at 4 p.m. the day before graduation each quarter. All other parking restrictions on streets or other areas are in effect 24 hours a day. These include loading zones, fire plugs, service drives, spaces for the handicapped and Caroline Draughon Village residential parking. Unregistered vehicles are also ticketed around the clock. One of the biggest problems, according to Dawson, is getting vehicles registered. "We are spending more time than ever before on unregistered cars. We have one person who now works on them full-time instead of about half-time. We send out more than 100 letters a day on unregistered vehicles and delinquent fines," Dawson said.

Another problem after tickets have been issued is that violators don't pay fees promptly. Many students try to wait until the end of the quarter or class registration to pay. This creates prob-

lems. Dawson said, "We send a list of people with unpaid tickets to the Bursar's Office two weeks before registration. People who try to pay at the end of the quarter are just creating more paperwork, costing the school more money and possibly delaying their registration for next quarter. This list also includes graduating seniors, but they are usually pretty good about paying."

To help deter violators from paying fines late, the Traffic and Parking Committee recommended a \$5 late charge for tickets that are not paid within 14 days. With the university president's approval, the measure took effect Fall Quarter.

With or without the late charge, tickets can add up quickly. Traffic Appeals Board Chairman Ian Hardin said some people who come before the Board have over \$100 in outstanding fines.

"Our situation is not ideal, but it could be much worse."—Hardin

"Several times a person has come before the Board owing in excess of \$400," Hardin said. "The most striking case I recall was a student who came to campus everyday at 10 a.m. He parked wherever he wanted. He really didn't care about the tickets, he was willing to

pay them. What he didn't realize I guess is that after 10 tickets his vehicle could be barred from campus."

Persons receiving tickets have to appeal within seven days of the violation. They may appeal in person or in writing. With three weeks left in Fall Quarter 1980, 337 appeals were made. Hardin estimated that about 25 percent of the appeals were granted. "Sometimes students can show that a mistake was made," he said. "Or sometimes emergencies arise that we [the board] have to make a judgement on. Many of the appeals that are upheld are unique situations that may have been out of the student's control."

"One of the biggest problems is with women parking near the dorms late at night. They might park next to a yellow curb, in fire lanes or on the grass due to the safety factor involved with the walking distances from the parking lots," he said.

The result is they still get tickets but Hardin says, "If the complaint is that there just aren't enough parking places, there isn't much that anyone can do. But, if a person is convinced he is right, he should take the time to be heard."

Kelly May, chairman of the Student Government Association Traffic and Parking Committee, says the Traffic Appeals Board is the place to be heard.

"The Traffic Appeals Board is a fair way of hearing complaints about parking," May said, "Many times students feel they have a just reason for parking where they do." He urged students to exercise their rights in appearing before the board. "The board is here for students and they should take advantage of it. Every student should be encouraged to go before the board if they feel they received a ticket unjustly. It will objectively evaluate every case."

Appeals may be the answer to tickets, but questions still remain about how to solve the real problem of not enough space.

In October 1978, Harland Bartholomew and Associates of Atlanta published "A 1995 Traffic and Parking Plan for Auburn University." The parking analysis included an inventory of avail-

able university parking and observations of parking conditions. (see chart). When considering only parking spaces used for daily campus activity, the average space per capita, according to the report was 0.29. The faculty had 0.85 spaces per member and there were 0.22 spaces open per student.

Comparing these findings on parking statistics with the 1980-81 university parking regulations and security office records (with three weeks remaining in Fall Quarter) 2,779 vehicles registered competed for 1,217 Zone A spaces, 1,733 vehicles registered competed for 1,227 Zone B spaces, 3,858 vehicles registered competed for 853 Zone C spaces and 5,616 vehicles registered competed for 2,757 Zone D spaces.

An important thing to remember is that Zone "A" cars can also park in Zones "B", "C" and "D", Zone "B" cars can also park in Zones "C" and "D" and so on. Any overflow flows downhill to Zone "D".

Although all registered vehicles aren't on campus at the same time, mathematically the problem is simple. You can't put 15,569 automobiles into 8,502 spaces!

The solutions aren't nearly as simple.

The Harland Bartholomew "1995 Plan" made three key recommendations: One, expand present parking lots; two, build three multi-level parking structures and three, establish a campus transit shuttle system.

How feasible are these recommendations?

Projections of campus population for 1995 show that the number of needed spaces must increase to approximately 11,500 to provide the present level of service, not to improve service, but just to maintain the present level. This would require an addition of about 175 spaces per year. According to the plan, the expansion of present lots would add 5,939 new surface spaces at a cost of \$3.56 million. And that is the 1978 estimate.

Tom Tillman, assistant campus planner, indicated that parking improvements are high on the priority list as far as concern goes, but there is simply no money available.

"Everyone agrees that parking is desperately needed," Tillman noted. "We do have long range plans for parking lot expansion."

One of the long range plans is an expansion of Coliseum parking. The plans which include paving the lot, would add 719 spaces to the existing lot.

The SGA Senate Traffic and Parking Committee and the Interfraternity Council have also studied ways to expand and improve the parking situation. Part of the proposal includes making a section of Morris Field into a parking lot and the addition of three

lots in available space near Caroline Draughton Village.

The "1995 Plan" proposed three multi-level parking structures, two located within the campus core. Each garage would provide 400-600 spaces for a total of 1,400 new spaces. The estimated cost was \$4.90 million (1978 dollars) or an average of \$3,500 per space.

The proposed structures brought varied responses from concerned parties.

"Multi-level garages could pay for themselves if the people are willing to pay to park in better places," said Tillman.



University ~~Secrets~~ Policy

by Beth Dees

What started out as an innocent question put to the head of campus security to find out background information for a story, turned into an intensive, frustrating but finally successful search for *Circle* writers Sonny Long and Beth Dees.

Numerous telephone calls and interviews with the administration failed to turn up information about how much was taken in from parking fines and where that money went. But they did consistently get the answer that "university policy" prevented the disclosure of the numbers. Then the initial quest to find out the figures grew into the larger question of "Why would a state-funded university cloak budget figures that seemingly would be in the public domain?"

The following quotes are excerpts taken from conversations with various members of the administration.

"I'd rather leave it open to speculation," said the first administrator interviewed. When confronted with the fact that the *Circle* knew he had access to the figures, he replied, "There are a lot of things that I don't deal with and that is one of them."

Another administrator said, "Some people would think we were making too much if we made \$194 or \$194,000." Later in the conversation, when asked why he wouldn't

release that specific information, he answered, "Because that information would be detrimental to our department."

In trying to explain "university policy," one university official said, "The university doesn't generally give out information on an individual department's budget. The university never tries to suppress anything, but to make everything everybody's business, no one would be able to get anything done."

Another explanation was, "The university is a constitutionally created entity with a board of directors who can use their own discretion in making rules of policy as long as they don't violate any other laws."

Following a suggestion made via *Circle* writer from Jim Raiford, Alabama's State Budget Director, an administrator suddenly found the information and called the *Circle* editor to set up an interview with the university's business manager, who gladly released the figures and explained them. Coincidentally, Funderburk's office was having troubles that same day with reporters from state papers who were causing trouble over not being able to get the minutes of the board of trustee's meetings.

The *Circle* still remains confused over why material that certainly proved *not* to be earth-shattering, should prove so hard to get. Guess it's just university ~~secrets~~ policy.

The student parking committee chairman believes the building of parking structures would destroy the beauty of the campus.

The most popular of proposed plans for improvement seems to be the implementation of a transit shuttle system. Campus transit systems are not a new idea. Many major universities in the country have them, and as far back as 1960 the University of Wisconsin began operating a shuttle bus service connecting a large fringe parking lot to the main campus. Actually, Auburn wasn't far behind. In the 60's a recent Auburn graduate had a franchise for campus. Shuttle buses made regular trips through campus. However, few people rode and the shuttle bus system quickly went out of business.

The "1995 Plan" calls for an eventual system of 10 to 14 articulated modular

transit vehicles (AMTV) similar to those used at the Atlanta Airport.

The system would primarily serve commuter students, married and fraternity housing residents and outlying dormitory areas. The plan proposed five routes which could be expanded to include off campus housing. Its estimated round trip travel time would be 10 to 15 minutes.

"It would help alleviate some problems," said Dawson. "I'm all in favor of a shuttle system if the students would be willing to cooperate. They would have to wait for buses and maybe stay on campus for lunch instead of driving home. The bus system could service all the trailer parks, but of course, the university couldn't pay for it either."

The SGA Senate Traffic and Parking Committee believes that a transit system is the answer to many parking prob-

lems. "We have done and are continuing research into the transit system. It is, of course, a long range plan," said the committee's chairman. "We propose it could and should be student funded by raising the price of parking decals. The decals would also entitle the student to a yearly or quarterly bus pass. If you don't have a car here, you could still buy a pass on a quarterly, monthly, weekly, or even a pay-as-you-ride basis."

This proposed system would initially incorporate two 25-passenger buses serving outlying trailer parks, distant parking lots and campus housing. The route would operate continuously with regular pick-up and drop-off times. The committee's proposal also includes a "midnight run" especially to the women's dorms and the library.

Along with these long-range solutions, one speech communications class

discussed short-range solutions, including issuing parking decals according to the distance a student lives from campus and not the academic status. The group also suggested repainting parking lots to exclusively accommodate economy cars and creating incentives for biking and carpooling.

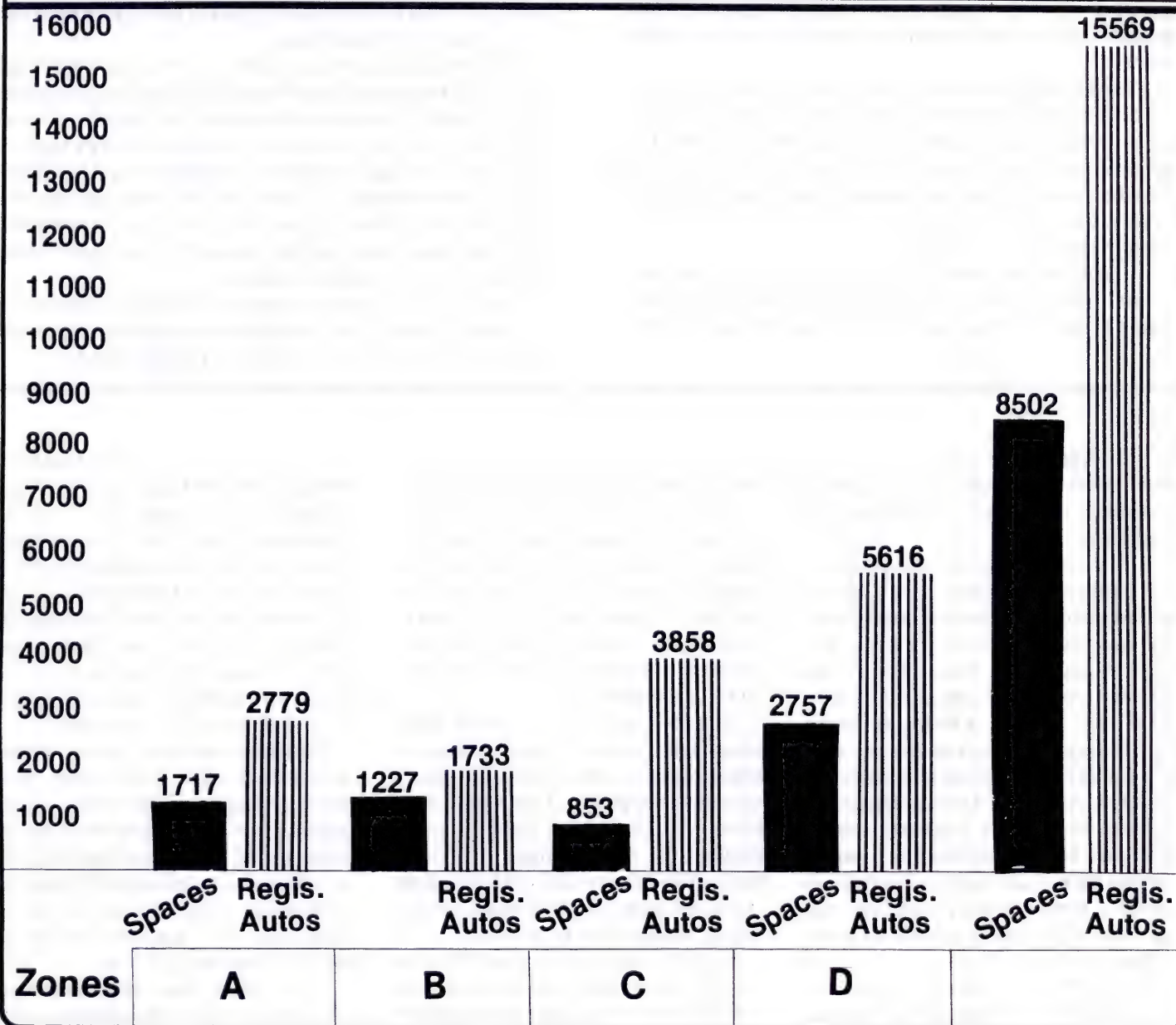
Whether these proposals would work could only be determined by their implementation in the future: meanwhile the tickets keep flowing. From his experiences at other schools and on Au-

burn's Traffic Appeals Board, Hardin commended, "Most universities that I am familiar with charge much more for parking than we do. Not all of them guarantee spaces either. Our situation is not ideal, but it could be much worse. On many campuses freshman and sophomores can't bring cars on campus no matter what." On a more philosophical note of justifying tickets Hardin said, "When people do commit violations, they usually do something to infringe on another person. A little more courtesy would ease a lot of frustrations."

Maybe that is the key to coping ...cooperation. Viable solutions, both short-range and long-range, do exist for the parking problems at Auburn. The concern voiced by students and administration is real but it will take concrete action before getting a ticket results from a willful violation instead of an unavoidable situation.



1980 Auburn University Parking Statistics



Proration:

No One's Pleasure, Everyone's Pain

by Beth Johnson and Steve Farish

Students have felt direct impact from proration in many areas. For the dorm student, maid service has been cut back from almost two maids per dorm to one. The maids no longer clean the bathrooms in dorms, nor can they enter a room to empty the trash. Students clean their own bathrooms and either empty their own trash or leave the wastebaskets in the hall for the maid to collect. Toilet paper has been rationed to one roll per person per week. The administration is considering further cuts in the residence halls, such as the removal of personal phones in the rooms. The number of workers at the dorm desks has also been cut, so that the dorm lobbies are not able to stay open as late at night as before.

These cutbacks have caused students, perhaps for the first time, to wonder how these financial problems have come about.

"Auburn now faces one of the most serious crises in its history, brought about by sharp increases in expenditures without increases in funds with which to provide staff and facilities." These could be the words of former Auburn University President Dr. Harry Philpott in 1979 after he learned that there would be no increase in the budget from the previous year, or they could be

the words of President Hanly Funderburk before this year's Legislature. In actuality, the statement came from neither of these sources but from an article by Herbert White in the April 6, 1955 issue of *The Plainsman*, after the University had suffered under four years of level funding.

These financial problems of Auburn for the past two years are not new, but rather a continuation of the struggle between Auburn University and the Legislature for "adequate" funding for



Photography: Mark Almond

Auburn. The problems have grown under Fob James' proration efforts.

Proration, according to the State Finance Director's Office, is simply a cutback in the amount of money that the state gives a university. The cutback applies to all of the four-year institutions in the state. The 14 four-year universities in Alabama are funded by the state through the Special Education Trust Fund (SETF), which is a pool of money coming from the revenues from sales tax, state income tax, utility tax, rental tax, property tax, lodgings tax, store licenses, tobacco tax, and use tax (excise tax on tangible personal property such as automobiles or mobile homes).

Proration occurs when the money collected from these taxes does not equal the amount that the state projected it would. In December of each year predictions are made as to the amount to be collected for the following fiscal year beginning in October. This ten-month time lapse often causes the predictions to be incorrect. For example, the prediction made in December of 1979, for the 1980-81 fiscal year, did not take into account the recession occurring in April of 1980. This recession decreased the revenue taken, especially from sales tax. The collected revenue is

measured monthly, so that proration is declared if the amount collected is down significantly. In this same example, proration of 4.2% was declared in early July, after the figures from April and May had been calculated. If the opposite situation occurs and there is more money in the SETF than expected, the extra revenue is distributed among the universities.

On a less statistical level, this financial situation has caused students to consider the effects on the quality of their education, and many are genuinely concerned that it has declined noticeably. However the opinions are mixed. One student feels that Auburn is "living on its past academic reputation," and another said, "This is the tip of the iceberg, things are going to get worse." Many students have seriously considered transferring to other schools because of the decline of their education at Auburn. Classes are more crowded now than before, and one student blames her lack of knowledge in a particular subject on this because she doesn't feel that the teacher was capable of handling the overload. Classes have had to be cancelled because of a lack in funding, and one civil engineering student says that the technical electives taught are not very diverse, so there is not much choice in what one can take.

Also, within the School of Engineering, many of the laboratories are in very poor condition, but there is no money available to improve them. Some instructors have told students that the possibility of a new engineering building is the only thing holding them at Auburn. These instructors do not feel that they can effectively teach what should be taught with the present condition of the facilities.

In one art class, there is not enough money to buy more supplies, so the work done by a student is cut drastically. A student in this class stated that she was not learning all that could or should be learned because of this shortage. In a laboratory-oriented class, practical work is not done in the shop buildings because of the expense involved; that work was previously included in the course. One student in this class feels that he is being "cheated."

The faculty is also directly affected by proration. Many, because of the lack of funding at Auburn to provide what they feel are adequate salaries, are actively looking for other jobs. As one faculty member stated, "When you are seriously thinking about leaving, it's hard to put 100% into your teaching." One professor said that he had "never seen the morale of the faculty so low," and another described it as widespread depression. All the faculty members interviewed agree that students aren't doing as well this year as they have in past years, and the prevalent theory is that they have picked up on the depression.

With the severe financial situation, no one is sure who will be considered extra, and who will be the next to go. One professor is even afraid to publish controversial papers in his field, for fear of what effect it will have on his job.

Because of cutbacks, class sizes have gotten larger and teachers are required to teach more classes. Because there are physical and psychological limitations to a person, some teachers have had to cut down on the number of assignments given and the amount of personal attention afforded each student. One does not feel that her students are receiving her best teaching, but because of her own limitations, she has no other choice. One dedicated faculty member has tried to adjust to her work overload, but

admits that the situation is becoming unbearable. She feels that the administration is taking advantage of the good will of the faculty, and asking too much from them. She says, "It's one thing to be a good guy, another to be a damn fool."

Due to the loss of instructors and the freeze on hiring, the English Department was faced with the problem of more freshman students than it could teach. The Department decided to have two very large sections of EH101, with an assortment of teachers teaching it, so that no one teacher would have too much of an extra burden. Most of the English faculty members have students from these classes assigned to them, and regularly grade these students' compositions, without ever seeing the students. Although this may seem like an impersonal method, the department felt that it was the least offensive "solution" to an intolerable problem.

Travel expenses for the faculty have also been limited or completely cut. Three professors who were committed to read papers at national conventions last spring found out they would receive no travel expenses. They went to the seminars and read their papers because of the prior commitment, but had to fund the trips themselves.

One student, whose parents are both members of the faculty, says that she can definitely see a difference in her par-



Photography: Mark Almond

ents' attitude. She feels they are both overworked, but because of their dedication, they still do the best that they can under the present situation. The physical and psychological strain is evident, and it has come to the point where either work at school or work at home must be neglected to some extent.

One faculty member, who has a daughter that will be attending college next fall, is not sending her to Auburn because he does not feel she will receive the good education she would receive somewhere else.

This is what proration has done to students and faculty. Why, then, one asks naturally, is the financial situation so severe? A look at the funding for Auburn for the past few years answers this question.

Dr. Harry Philpott took office as President of Auburn University in 1965. During his administration, proration first occurred in the 1975-76 fiscal year, but, according to Dr. Philpott, it "was a proration we were able to adjust to because we carried a reserve fund." A freeze was placed on hiring during this proration and no cutbacks in salary were made.

When Dr. Hanley Funderburk assumed office in April of 1980, however, he was met with a financial situation much graver than any during Philpott's administration. The budget for the 1978-79 fiscal year was \$54 million, and for the following fiscal year the Board of Trustees had asked for \$78 million. Upon the request of Governor James, though, the Board of Trustees changed its request to \$54 million, level funding from the previous year. Taking into account double-digit inflation for that year, however, the budget was decreased in real terms by more than \$5 million. In July of 1980, only three months into Funderburk's administration, the Governor's Office declared a proration of 4.2 percent. This 4.2 percent announced three-quarters of the way into the fiscal year had to be taken from the budget for the final quarter, which meant that for that quarter proration was equivalent to 16.8 percent. Then, if this was not enough to deal with, at the end of September, one week before the end of the fiscal year, this 4.2 percent proration was increased to 7 percent. So, from the

\$4 million dollars originally allocated to Auburn, 3.78 million dollars was cut by proration, on top of the over 5 million that was taken by inflation. Actually, then, there was a decrease of over 9 million dollars from the budget of the previous year.

Even with this proration, at the beginning of the 1980-81 fiscal year, faculty received salary increases ranging from 6-16%. This raise does not, however, keep their salaries abreast with inflation.

The approved budget for Auburn for the 1980-81 fiscal year, which began on October 1, of 61.6 million dollars, has already been prorated by 7%, on top of double digit inflation once again. Also, \$1.5 million of this money is already ear-marked by the administration for a reserve fund. So what seems to be a substantial increase in dollars from the previous year is not really that large, if there is any increase at all.

This budget situation for the past three years has reduced library purchases by 49.5 percent, and book purchases have been reduced by 90 percent of the 1978 level in order to keep the present periodicals at the library.

The budgets discussed in the above paragraphs are first presented to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) by the University in October of the preceding year. The Commission then studies all the proposed budgets, makes revisions, and on the basis of the Weighted Semester Credit Hour, makes its recommendation to the governor, who proposes his version of the budgets to the Legislature. The Weighted Semester Credit Hour formula assigns a weight to each instructional hour on the basis of cost and program level (an hour of veterinary medicine, for example, is more costly than an hour of home economics), then multiplies the proper factor by the number of credit hours for each subject in the University. Auburn no longer offers a remedial English course and the hours of the composition lab have been drastically cut, because they do not generate such Credit Hours. Auburn produces more of these credit hours than any other university in the state.

Despite this fact, in the past two years, according to the Chronicle of

Higher Education, Auburn University has received no increase in funding. Eleven other four year institutions, however, have received above 12 percent increases, with Montevallo and Livingston receiving the highest increase of 21 percent. The University of Alabama, UAB, UAH, and South Alabama all received a 15 percent increase. This information is especially disturbing when one considers that Auburn is the largest university in the state and has an average ACT score of entering freshmen of 22.3, which places Auburn's students academically in the top 10% of all schools in the nation.

There are proposed solutions to this problem of proration. The most prominent at the present time is a bill offered by Senator Ted Little of Auburn that would hold 5 percent of the SETF in reserve in case a miscalculation does occur, so that money will not have to be taken directly out of a university's budget. In addition, the bill would change the process by which the revenue in the SETF is projected, so that, according to its author, the projections would be vastly more reliable. One other long term solution is to eliminate or consolidate some of Alabama's numerous junior colleges (Alabama has the highest number of institutions of higher education per capita in the nation). This would leave more funds available for the four-year universities in the state.

Although Auburn University has been faced with financial problems in the past, this is possibly the most critical situation that the University has had to deal with. Some people feel that too much damage has already been done, and it will take fifteen or twenty years for Auburn to regain its previous academic standards. If inadequate funding continues, the quality of education at Auburn will continue to decline until a diploma will not be worth the paper that it is printed on. The financial crises of 1955, which produced banner headlines in *The Plainsman*, were overcome by a three pronged effort of faculty, students and administration to make the state aware of Auburn's funding problem. The crises of today can be overcome in like manner.





etching by Debbie Hartsell

NAMESAKE

1.

In moonlight
the black iron frame burns
its shadow on the white wall
like a cell door.

And I have seen death writhe on the mattress,
have heard tell of Uncle Roy chained down
after the stray hound sank mad teeth
into the lean flesh of his calf,
have heard Aunt Cara rattle her beads
as the doctor confirmed rabies.

They say sweat ran off him in streams
and he snapped at every visitor,
ascending to human speech again
only to demand raw meat.
The priest could not get the last rites right,
so shaken was he by the change.

Outside the corn begged for rain,
but Roy feared every thought of water
and fought through sedation twice
to growl like a maniac,
while the penned coon dogs
dragged their tails in the dust,
caught a strange scent on the wind.
They lay in chinaberry shade
as buzzards swept the air overhead
looking for a place to settle, something dead.

When the last spasms ceased
and the racket body went to the mortuary,
every relative drifted in
carrying a plate or pot
as if famine had caused the sadness.
They spoke in quiet tones
about the hound found dead
in the cedar woods, a grin centering his rage.
At least, this is the story they tell.

Next day the corn was cut to tatters:
hail. At least, this is the story they tell.

2.

Now a deadly hunger calls me here
to the back bedroom where no soul has slept since,
a fascination intangible as moonlight
that arrests me in a wing chair
to watch the mattress once soaked with the overflow
of a madness found in the yard.

A need to reach out to shadows
of the headrail on the wall,
wrap my hands around the past
and understand how my bloodkin
could suffer like a beast in human form
sets my mind to writhing,
denies me human speech.

Is this rehearsal to accept a birthright
Biblical as a pharaoh's dream
and cursed as a poisoned well.
While the clan reunion thrives in other rooms
on anecdotes, white wine
and the stories they feel they must tell,
I am face to face with childhood's fear,
the man who went back to gnashing
and the furtive eye alone.

I must be seeking to slake this thirst
for the source of my given name,
the light of the canine moon.

I must be hungry for the shared growl
and other teeth-scars
deep in the human bone.

Just now, I walk to the window,
my mouth as dry as stone.

—R. T. Smith

izod

i am covetous
of a certain
miniature reptile
who,
with the ploy
of a coy smile
manages to ride
some of the largest
breasts in town.

—Ken Taylor

diner/pensacola

conversations float by your table
like a note in a bottle
just beyond reach.
money changes hands.
a girl's pretty face appears
like a clear work
out of static.
newspapers warn
of impending elections
in banana republics.

in the booth
behind you
another face,
a face as worn
as the shells
tumbling in the surf.
and a face
like your own
etched briefly into glass
and the darkness behind.

—A. J. Wright



LEAF

It is dry and stiff, completely still, dead, yet dressed so brilliantly loud for death, the color of royalty, the red coat of a British soldier in the Revolution, the robe of Christ. As if the fine artist has painted it with a sacred brush. I pick it up and look carefully at the veins shooting upwards with other tiny veins hundreds spreading from all sides like the branches in trees, as if this leaf has recorded with pictures like cave drawings every tree it has fallen from in the last million years.

—Dean Wiseman Golden

BEACH WALK

I walk down the long, lonely, empty
beach—empty of humans—
kicking sand beneath my slowly
scuffling feet.
Before me, the little sand crabs
scurry violently,
racing away from my approach.
Before me the birds rise in abrupt,
agonized flights,
fleeing from my approach.
Before me, the tiny wavelets slip
gently back into the
huge protecting body of the sea.
I wade into the water, and all the
little fish
become darting streaks of silver,
fleeing, ever fleeing, me.
Above me, clouds scud in scrambled
disorder across the sky—
puffy, white, white clouds against the
pure blue emptiness.
I slosh out of the disdainful water and
turn back,
following my sandy footprints.
The birds take flight,
The wavelets slide back into the ocean;
I wade in again, and the fish dart away,
And the sand crabs scurry desperately,
While above me the clouds still race
along.
I walk alone. On the beach.

—Victoria M. Potter

LOVE GAMES

Green eyes to brown—
Soft voices speaking,
Small touches wandering,
Here, there,
a hair tugged,
a hand touched,
a shoulder smoothed,
Electricity. Love games.
Small words connect
Thoughts so transparent,
Seen clearly
Like shouted.
It is not love,
but love games,
Sparked by attraction,
Fanned with desire,
Roaring for two un-children
Confused,
Finding some satisfaction
In love games.
Brown eyes to green—
Looking, searching, wanting
What cannot be
Except in love games,
Lest other eyes see.

—Abby Pettiss



drawing by Carol Ann Person



by Jimmy Sailors

The battered fighter craft was adrift, far from any recognizable place, when its pilot finally came to. The myriad of instrument lights in the cockpit gave a death-like glow to the pilot's flushed and swollen face. Crystal streams of dried blood trailed down from a festering cut on his forehead. Groggy and disoriented, the pilot fumbled for the mic switch on the panel before him.

"Ship's status," he breathed.

Silence. He flipped the override switch. "Ship's status," he said again.

The computer facing lit up with blue and green tones, and its usually melodious feminine voiced boomed, "Navigational and warp drive systems are inoperable, due to the last hit we sustained, captain. All other on-board systems are either operational or under repair." There was an appropriate pause. "How do you feel, Captain Ranar? You were unconscious for quite a long time."

The captain raised his hand to rub his aching forehead. His churning stomach felt as though it would empty itself onto his lap at any second. "I...don't think that I am well, thank you, computer." He glanced at his wrist chronometer. "How long did you say I was unconscious?"

"I didn't say, but you were out for almost five hours."

"Five hours," he mumbled. It was probably over by now, the biggest battle of that or any war. He had to reach Proxima Civilaris before the end came: his squadron would need him, and he wanted to be there when that key rebel outpost fell. What two years of interstellar war had led up to would be resolved in less than a day. He had to be there: his brother, no doubt, would.

He pressed a button on the armrest and, from behind the computer, a portable navigational computer popped up. He

picked up the primitive astrolabe beside it and weighed it in his palm. "Okay, computer, just give me our present coordinates and I ought to be able to figure the course out by myself. It hasn't been that long since I was a cadet."

"I'm sorry, captain, but I can't determine our present position."

Truly perplexed, the pilot lowered the astrolabe onto his lap. "Explain."

"After we sustained the laser hit from the rebel cruiser that knocked out our warp drive and navigation, our natural inertia carried up a great distance from the Proxima Civilaris system. Of course, you were knocked unconscious and thus did not know that we were headed straight into an intense electromagnetic storm. My override systems were damaged by the laser blast and were only just recently repaired, but my sensors recorded all the events that took place after the hit. What this ship passed through can be called a 'wormhole,' as theories predict just such a phenomenon to occur. Obviously, my inability to locate a familiar star and, thus, to compute a position are attributable to this phenomenon."

The sterility and quickness of the computer's speech was quite a bit more than the exhausted pilot could handle. He asked a question from what he could comprehend of the dialogue. "How did this, this 'wormhole,' come about?"

The computer's memory banks worked for a second. "The term 'wormhole' is a twentieth-century construction. The existence of such phenomenon was theorized by Albert Einstein, the renowned physicist, and, up to this time, have never been encountered by man.

"They can exist anywhere and are characterized by a high intensity field of electromagnetic radiation. Classified as

portals between time and spatial dimensions, they work on the same principle as 'black holes' except they do not interfere with the fabric of space around them. My own theory of where we are, captain, is biased toward these facts, that we have somehow have been transported to a time and spatial dimension other than our own.

The captain picked up on the dialogue content this time around. "So you are saying that we are out-of-sync with our own universe. Excuse me for being so pompous, but is it possible for us, by using your sensors, to backtrack our course so that we may enter the wormhole from this side and come out again in our universe?"

"That is a highly probable hypothesis, captain, and I commend you for your effort, but it has little possibility of working. Time and space continuums are rapidly changing things and, thus, cannot be predicted as having certain, stable characteristics. Now, the theories point out..."

"Damn the theories, computer!" He was rather perturbed by the female voice telling him everything he should have known already from his training. Sometimes he wondered why he picked that voice pattern for his ship, anyway. "Does my hypothesis stand a chance in hell of working?"

The computer's answer was slow in coming, as though it was personally insulted by the unorthodox outburst. "Yes, there is a chance that your theory will work."

"And how long will it take to implement the plan?"

"On-board systems' repairs will be completed in approximately two hours. We should have sufficient impulse power to carry us to the rendezvous point by that time."

"Good." He put the astrolabe away and folded his arms across his chest. "Wake me up when the repairs become finalized."

* * *

As the captain slept, he dreamed about his past.

It was two years ago, and another glorious afternoon at the military outpost on Antares IV was coming to a close. Captain Ranar sat alone at the officer's club bar, sipping on his third and last mint julep before he headed for home. The club was sparsely peopled and there was little else to look at besides the trickling fountain and the open, outside door. Ranar was preferring the latter of the two when a familiar old face appeared in the doorway.

A moustached major, donning his ceremonial uniform complete with a chest full of multicolored decorations, stepped just inside the entrance and surveyed the place before he made his way toward a corner table. Captain Ranar rose and caught the man before he had a chance to sit down.

"Bill! Bill Grayson!", he shouted, "Now don't tell me that you don't remember your old partner that pulled you through cadet training, singlehandedly!"

The major stared at the newcomer with a scowl until he recognized him. "John Ranar! God, it's good to see you again! What have you been doing over these...oh, how many years is it...six years since graduation?"

"Oh, I've been staying with the flight force, drinking mint juleps, and doing very well; although not as well as I see that

you have been doing. Where did you get all those decorations from anyway? Steal them?"

They talked over old times together, of the way things had been and the way that they were supposed to have been. The conversation weaved itself around to the present day, and John ended up providing most of the talking.

"How is the one and only Mrs. Ranar doing?"

"As well as can be expected. We've got two kids now, both toddlers, and they run her ragged around the house. They're a pair of scrambling brothers, as rough with each other as they are with themselves."

"By the way, John, how is your brother Cliff doing? Last I heard he had dropped out of flight school to become a colonizer."

"That he did. He packed up and left from home about four years ago to look for what he called 'greener pastures and freer air,' whatever that's supposed to mean. Actually, no one in the family has heard hide nor hair of him since he moved out to the Hyrkadian sector. Most of us just say 'good riddance' since Cliff always was the troublemaker in the family."

"I hear that that sector is a hotbed of trouble these days. Sounds like it's just the place for your brother, with all those revolutionaries I hear tell about running loose out there."

"No, you've got it all wrong, Bill. That sector isn't really a trouble spot, it's just a breeding ground for rumors of all shapes, colors and descriptions. It'll all blow over once the press figures out that the people just don't care about hearing it anymore."

The conversation dragged on, and before much longer it turned stale. Bill suggested that they listen to the flight force frequency on the radio imbedded in their table.

The radio had a roll tuner, so they had to pass over several interspace frequencies before they got to the frequency that they desired. One particular frequency caught their attention because it came in as clear as the flight force transmissions themselves. They listened with interest to a part of the conversation.

"Red-niner over."

"Go ahead red-niner."

"I'm coming out of formation, directed toward heading two-three-two. Do you copy?"

"Roger, red-niner. How about you, blue-niner? Are you on course?"

Bill interrupted the radio. "Doesn't that sound like Cliff to you?"

John listened more closely. "Yeah, it does. But what would Cliff be doing in this part of the galaxy?"

"It sounds like he's in some kind of fighter group to me. As to the reason why he's here, that's anybody's...hey, I think I just heard them mention the base."

The squadron leader that sounded like Cliff continued. "...come in from the north and hit the refinery. Blue-niner, scout over the capital and knock out the communications center. Then aim for the government buildings and the cities to the east. I'll head toward the military base with my group and knock out the planetary defense systems. Are all instructions clear?" He received two acknowledgements.

"Withhold all communications during the attack. Good luck on your missions, and to the revolution."

The radio went silent. John reached across the table to turn it off. "My God, they're coming in for a strike. And my brother is leading them."

The sounds of laser blasts and crumbling buildings could be heard in the distance, and they were getting closer. The building began to shake, glasses tinkled in the cupboards, and the fountain's trickling turned into a torrent.

The club's patrons continued sitting, dumbfounded by the things that were occurring. Bill took the initiative. "Everybody, get out of here! We're under attack!"

Bill and John raced for the doorway, followed by the small crowd of people. The scene outside was chaotic. People were yelling and running in all directions. Towers of black smoke bellowed from sheared-off portions of structures that used to be buildings. Overhead, the fighter craft of the rebellion force were making low passes over the outpost, spewing more laser fire on top of the destruction.

Suddenly, John took off running across the compound grounds. Bill thought that John had panicked and took off after him. He caught him in no time, and both men fell to the ground.

John fought like some wild, caged animal. "I've got to get to my house! To my wife, and my kids!" He broke free of Bill's grip. "I've got to get there I've got to..."

The wild-eyed man ran down the main boulevard toward the section where the officers' quarters were located. He ran over and through the carnage, pumping his legs until they felt like rubber. He heard the defense horn as it sounded, over and over again, booming and reverberating in his ears. To himself he mumbled, "I've got to get back, I've got to, I've got to..."

* * *

"Captain Ranar? Wake up, Captain Ranar. The repairs on the ship have been completed."

The captain awoke with a start, soaked in sweat from the delirious fever that was just now breaking. "Oonnh, oh, my God," he mumbled, "I've got to get back! I've got to stop him

before he does it again!"

Attempting to ignore the captain's ravings, the computer said, "Would you like me to implement the course back to the rendezvous point?"

"The course back?!" The captain snapped back into the present situation. "No, computer. I think I'll be able to handle the ship's controls by myself."

He flipped the knob on the controls and the ship came under his power. He regulated the impulse thrusters with his thumb and slowly turned the ship around onto the coordinates written out on the computer facing. He felt the minor g-forces as he accelerated the ship to just under light speed. He had a determined smile on his lips.

The computer broke into his train of thought. "An electromagnetic storm is brewing just ahead on collision course. I suggest that we take evasive action to further investigate the phenomenon to make sure that we're not making some kind of calculation error..."

That was as far as the computer got before it was switched off. The captain leaned back and relaxed his hands on the controls and coasted into the storm.

It wouldn't be long now, he thought. Not long before his brother met his match...and his destiny.

* * *

The velvet cloak of space parted and John was kneeling in a trench dug out of a grassy plain. To either side of him were men, like himself, all dressed in blue uniforms with rounded caps. He looked down at his own body and saw the same clothes, and the same wood and metal weapon that the others had.

A man in a blue uniform rode up on a proud stallion and posied himself in front of the troops. "This battle's liable to be long, boys, so just set down tight until I signal for a boyonet charge. There ain't no way in hell ole Johnny Reb's gonna be able to make it through this line."

The men in the trenches tensed and prepared themselves for the upcoming struggle. John could only lean back and whimper, for he had traded another man's battle for his own.



THE POINT

Winds of different times and places
Vary north, south, east and west
Weather vanes will follow blindly
Never knowing which is best.

But the needle of the compass
Holds a true and steady course
The direction of a ship is
More important than its force.

—Daniel Haulman

THE SIDESTEP

For R.E.

"Today is your birthday," Mother said, "and what does that make you?"

"Free!" the little girl said, rising up to the ceiling, hovering at the light fixture.

"Down! Down! Down!" her mother said. "We must get this straight. Today is your birthday, and what does that make you?"

"Free, free, free!" the little girl said, flying out the window and into the treetops, where two sparrows and a nuthatch greeted her, "Free!"

"Down indeed," her mother said and grabbed her wrist. She looked the little girl in the face and said, "One, two *Three*. Th, th, *Three*. Th, Th, *Three*. Your turn."

"Th, th, three," the little girl said, but a tear swelled her eye.

"Three."

"Three."

"*Three*," they said together. And with that they crumbled into a pile of dust, which Father sidestepped neatly on his way to get the evening paper.

—Kenneth Likis

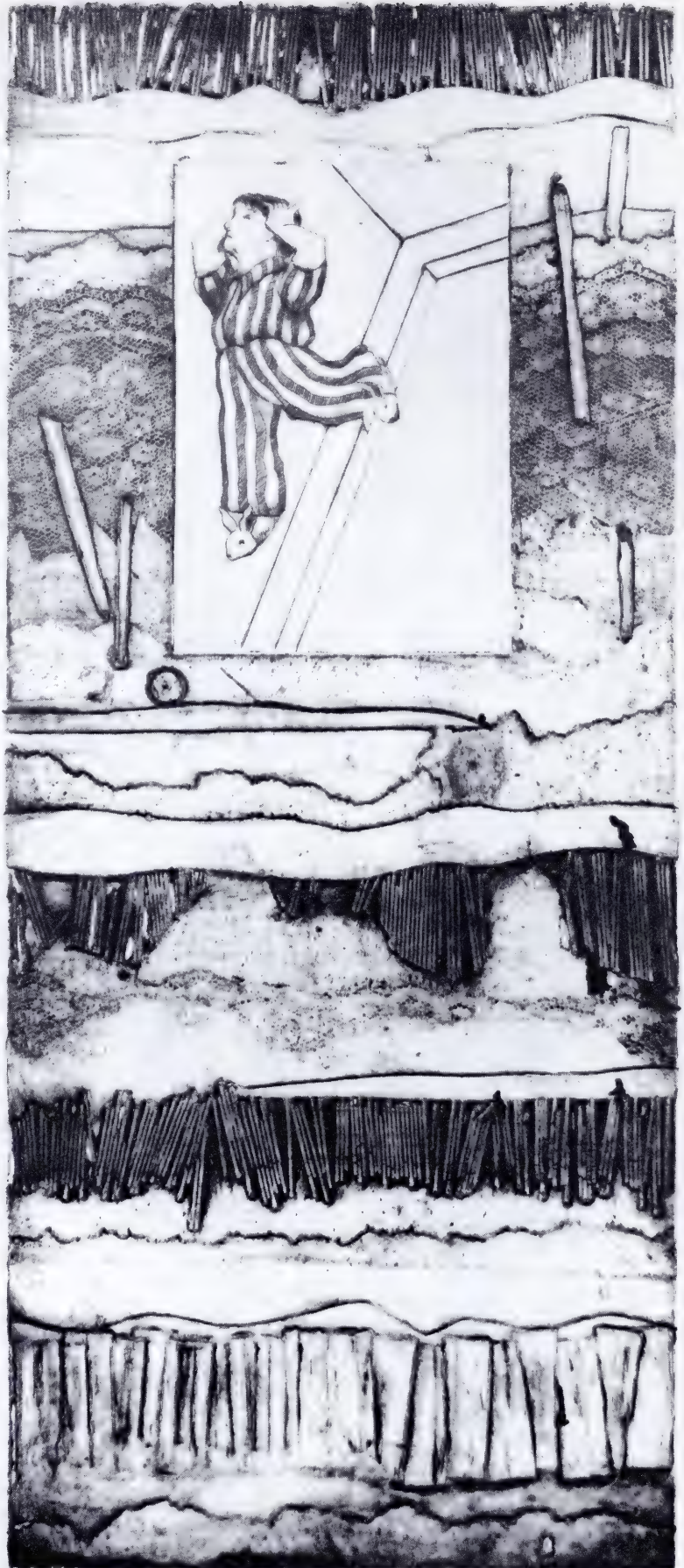
EVENING'S BROKEN LIGHT

Weathered, finger-like
branches
reach up and
etch themselves across the
solemn face of a
Hunter's moon.

Divided and shattered
it stands alone,
an oval amber light—
surrounded by darkness
unpenetrated
save the smaller pieces of
broken glass;

Only to be collected
and pieced together,
and cast from a different hill
on another night.

—J. B. Broome



etching by Roy Sexton



Wings of Winter

by P. S. O'Gwynn and Bryan Pierce

Photo by Mike Donahue

John looked out the window of his tiny off-campus apartment and wondered if somewhere under the muting winter mists the bright colors and familiar shapes which had characterized his neighborhood in the Fall existed still, or if they were permanently dulled and blurred. He shook his head letting the curtain fall back in front of the window. Gray was the only color he could imagine that morning. With a string of Monday morning groans, he gathered his books together, picked up his umbrella and walked out of his apartment.

He trudged passed Toomer's Corner like he did everyday, but this particular Monday his eye picked up each detail and turned it into insult. Some soggy toilet paper remained caught in the trees from a hopeful but hopeless football season. Each white splotch represented to John, another defeat, and his pace picked up as he rehashed the Auburn/Alabama game. The pre-game death of Tiger, Auburn's eagle, had surely been an omen.

Still thinking about Tiger, John walked between the pillars marking the entrance to Samford Park and stopped to look for a moment at the stone eagles atop each pillar. It struck him as somewhat ironic that a symbol of freedom should be encased in stone. At least those eagles wouldn't die.

John left the eagles while Samford Tower musically chimed the hour. Ten minutes until class. The mist was dissolving and the clouds, like a family making last minute preparations before leaving for a trip, were rolling and bumping chaotically across the sky.

When John focused his eyes back on the path, he saw a girl he had met at a party the past Saturday night walking toward him. As she approached, he tried hard to remember her name, but she passed him quickly, her head tilted down, relieving the obligation to speak. John was left with an impression of the girl's face when, as they passed, she glanced up into his eyes. She wasn't as pretty as she had appeared to be in the dimming swimming lights of the party. Now, in the morning light, after drinking orange juice *without* vodka, her cheeks lacked the blush and her eyes the sparkle which had graced them on the previous evening. She looked as plain as a cake without frosting.

Seeing the girl brought back other memories from the party. Too vividly he recalled an early morning spent in the bathroom with nausea lurching like a vengeful devil in his stomach—a devil taunting him for too many eye squinting, body quaking gulps of whiskey, too many cigarettes and too too much inane conversation.

Five more minutes to get to class. John sat down on a bench. He tried but couldn't find a good reason to go to class. There were, he was certain, at least a thousand students in his History 102 class, and he didn't think even one of them cared about the subject. And he doubted that his professor, or any professor, could have love enough in his heart for one thousand students.

John put classes out of his mind and surveyed the scene before him. From his bench, he could see tall narrow pines and squat green bushes tied together by criss crossing paths, inhabited by tame squirrels and bordered on one side by a harmony of impressive red brick buildings. Auburn looked exactly like a college campus was suppose to look. All of the fine traditions of Southern life and college life were faithfully carried out. There were healthily mischievous fraternity boys in suits, full blossomed sorority girls bubbling sweet intonations, and a monolithic football stadium built to accommodate masses of orange and blue shake shake shakers. All of these flourished under the paternal gaze of Samford Tower—the honored guardian of tradition.

Auburn, John decided, had given him everything he had wanted in a college as a high school senior. But now, after one and a half quarters of school, he was dissatisfied. Tradition could be comfortable and even beautiful, but it was irrelevant in the passing of day to day events. How to fight the boredom of everyday life? He hated to admit to himself that he was bored because boredom had always been considered a sign of a dull mind in his family. John remembered one of the themes his father loved to fall into. He would say, "Son, no place is every big enough, grand enough, exciting enough for the young. So get an education. Then you'll have the world at your disposal—if not physically at least mentally."

John was beginning to see the sense in this. Boredom could never be blamed totally on environment. He disbelieved it when, listening to Samford Tower clang the half hour, he found himself regretting that he had already missed half of his class. He could always slip in late. The professor wouldn't notice. Almost laughing, he realized he was actually scheming on how *not* to cut a class.

Two frisbee players had come out with the sun, and as John got up from his bench, a red disk fell by his feet. He grabbed the frisbee and with new found energy flung it back to the fellow student. Then he double timed it to Haley Center.



KENNETH PASTE

Years flow by like syrup
but the memories run like water
and analogies, though never
 my strong point,
fill my hours. And
times I should have kept quiet;
hate I have shown;
are mistakes, that in their destructive impact,
have left me humbled.

Hair in place-
thick rimmed glasses-
dog for the teacher-
the person that breeds aversion-
-I never liked him-
Older than I—maybe,
(bigger for a fact),
in the world of pages
-1'r 2'r 3'r-
one would swear he concocted each
adverbial phrase,
created every grammatical rule
 (to correctly recite as I, and others, took a seat
 in lieu of our own misinterpretation).
Even the equations bore his signature,
as smiling, then serious, he greeted them
as nearly forgotten works that then came forth
in divine revelation.

His intellect was his crime.
From behind I would stare at the repulsive shape
of his pear-like head
(glasses tucked neatly behind each ear)
—I could not like him-
clumsy, he was.
Yet no more than I
but I noticed him more.
He never said grace at lunch
 by himself
(while I would dream—seated with others—
 bamboo shoots
to shred in his soup.
They love your stomach, I had heard.)
And now the busses—big, yellow busses—
are the objects of my antipathy.
They creak and groan with laughter. Clicheically,
they almost seem to be taunting...me.

He never taunted me.

He would not have dared.
For bigger, he was still small
-we both knew that-
—but I would not like him.
He had never helped me in any way,
and I knew enough than to ask for help.
I didn't need it.
Not from him.
Our worlds were different:
I said grace—he had the answers
I had friends—he had the teacher
I labored through the texts—he could have written them
I was human—he did not show it
I rode my bicycle—he rode the bus.

And all this
I held against his name.

On a day halfway through
two years of hating
 this Einsteinian clown,
astraddle my bike,
I watched those big yellow busses
 laden with classmates
pull from the parking lot
 rounding the corner
onto the main highway.
Looking back at the school I saw
a figure emerge, running, no
 lurching, and clumsily, across the expanse of
the parking lot in an attempt
to reach the highway
before the busses
were completely
gone.

I knew exactly who it was
and my heart leapt with joy
 imagining
him tripping
 books and glasses
 sailing into the street
ripped and crushed
 beneath the wheels
 of unconcerned citizens

laughing, as I
at the due justice paid
to this insipid individual.

Then time stopped.

But only for an instant.
Yet struggling to revive itself
it crept forward slowly
and time became scenes
became pictures
forming, then
dissolving, then
dissolving...

His bus had rounded the corner and was gaining
momentum, while he was steps away from the curb. Still
a few yards ahead of the bus, he plodded forward, his
free arm flailing madly, and eyes fixed, through thick
lenses, on the approaching vehicle. In an awkward
instant he stepped off the curb.

And lost his balance.

Banshees screeched
with laughter,
echoing through my empty skull
as I watched him
suspended in midair
before a bus
whose brakes were of no use.
Books were not ripped

but tossed softly off the highway
as his frail body
burst
on the impact of cold, metal
hatred.

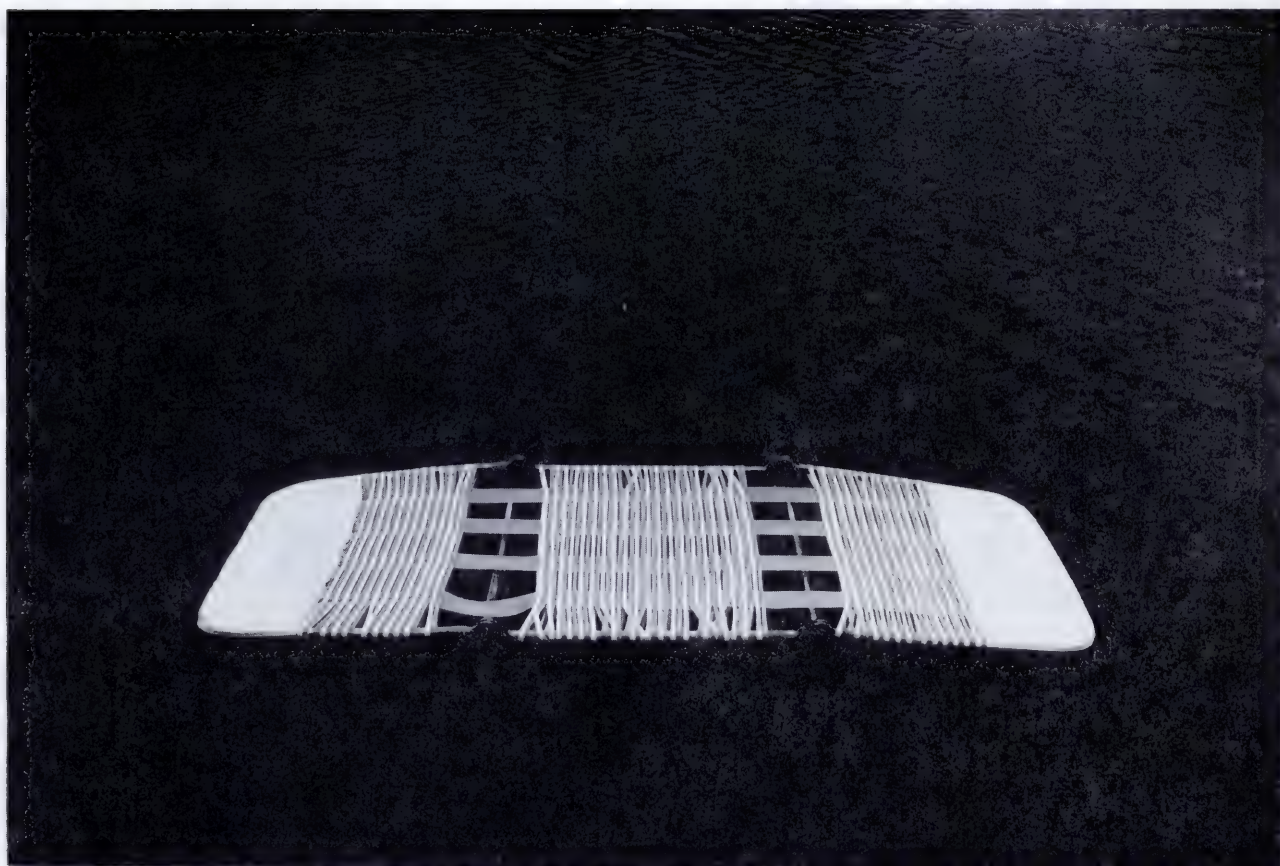
Watching as he was thrown
limply upon his books,
I noticed
those thick, blinding glasses
adorned his face no longer.
Upside down, they were lodged
in the grill of the bus
from which the driver had emerged
crying "OhmyGodOhmyGod"
as my mind exploded
and I too, began
to scream.

Years ooze like blood
and memories only make it redder
and compassion shames me
and I remember tears
I could not control
sprawled face-first in the grass
and a buss
that finally pulled out from my school
two hours late
with a pair of thick, brown rimmed glasses
comically lodged
in its leering red grill...

—R. Mike Donahue



photograph by Karen Richter





Photography by Bruce Hyer



Start up the Ferris Wheel

by Tim Dorsey

The entire affair began back in Auburn about ten days before finals. What happened was so incredibly weird and confusing, that a chronological format is necessary to make any cohesive understanding possible.

Day 1

I decided to start studying tomorrow for finals. I was feeling fairly spent as it was and knew how much energy this thing would demand from me. I also knew that this operation would never be sanctioned.

Condone the way that we were going to prepare for finals? Hell, what was going to go down was totally out of bounds. Absolutely out the door and off the road. Most people have no conception of a certain deranged level that many things operate on. Especially here at Auburn.

All the better because they would not get in the way. Maybe a puzzled face or curious inquiry, but no, there would be no interference from the civilians.

Day 2

The conflict begins. I empty out all my desk drawers and begin looking for the textbooks.

My roommate had just gone out to acquire the mandatory cases of beer. If you're going to do something, do it big, do it in a way that no one else will believe. It's good to try to push things sometimes. And when you do, you better push it to the ridiculous. In the business this is known as "pushing something." That's what we were doing.

Day 3

The alarm went off, sounding like a defective swimming pool pump, but I managed to claw my way into the shower. Don't even try to stand up, I thought, just let the water run all over you as you are, face to the tiles. How many have been maimed or even killed in shower-related accidents? No, I'm not going to pull anything foolish. I'll just lie here, thank you. I sure as hell don't have any plans to be the talk of the family: "Well, he's been that way ever since he had that little accident in the shower. Excuse me, he's dribbling again."

I fell asleep in the shower, turning my body into one big raisin. This caused me to miss all my classes except the last one. I missed that one on my own.

We started on some calculus at four that afternoon before eating an entire bag of Bloating Cheese Wads and a bunch of bananas. A once-poor diet had now become stupid. We mixed rum with Kool-aid and mixed more rum with that.

Drawing by Greg Tankersley

Then we added some more rum and drank it. We continued this kind of behavior until the Kool-aid was gone. We were then forced to pour rum in a glass, mix some rum with it, and drink that, too.

Things were starting to happen. We had to push this thing to where it had meaning. Sure, up the stakes, float the mother load, the entire wad.

Day 4

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when I came to. I was half hanging out the door of my apartment with an English book in my hand. Other students coming back from class were forced to walk around me.

I finally found my roommate behind the refrigerator and we were off to a local beanery.

There we sat in torn jeans and dark sunglasses huddling over our cups of coffee and slices of apple pie. We had made it this far and seemed totally in control. It must have been the excitement that drove us on: the feeling that at any moment everything would come crashing down, that the whole scene would fall apart like some kind of off-beat joke and we'd be frantically making airline reservations and forging passports. We threw a few singles on the counter and left.

Maybe this was all a sick superiority trip I thought as we walked through a group of sorority girls. Let's be serious, those girls couldn't possibly understand our operation.

Becoming properly frazzled around one o'clock I decided to finish up my term paper. Everything was going fine, and I thought I was being very concise in summarizing my points. My roommate then noticed that I had been typing the letter "p" for a half hour.

Day 5

For the last few days now, the two of us had been very resourceful. We were using everyday items from a supermarket to stay at optimum alteration for finals. With a little imagination, we compiled an enterprising shopping list. It included coffee, sugar, Vapo-rub, cold capsules, No-Doz, buffered aspirin, assorted brands of beer, vitamins A, B-1, B-12, C, D, E, L and Q, various sinus reliefs, cough syrups, analgesics, Bactine, diet pills, and Roloids.

Normally one would not think twice about these products, but when combined in some ungodly fashion, they produce a rivetting effect. Unlike recreational drugs, these are brutal, often leaving the user contorted and doubting his most basic instincts. Perfect for studying.

We cleared off a table and spread out our cache. We lit a few candles and moved cautiously, figuring that, at any moment, Gene Hackman would bust in and open up on us with an M-16. Probably not, but the Roloids had begun to take effect.

Day 6

I lay awake all night last night. Either that or I fell asleep and dreamed that I was lying there awake. This morning I felt as if someone were tapping all over my head with a ball-pen hammer.

Though both of us were totally inert, we knew that getting to the bank today was imperative. But could we handle ourselves in public? Would we get totally brittle? Would we freak and start knocking old ladies down? Occupational hazard. I quickly sucked down yet another cup in a gripping binge of battery-acid coffee.

We arrived at the bank an hour later.

Shapes became very rigid. By the way, when was the last time I blinked? Some time this morning probably, but how could I be sure? I was no longer dealing with time—too far gone for that.

What the hell was that! What on earth's going on here! Is it heat lightning in here or what? Oh, it's only a defective fluorescent bulb. In a state like mine, something like that goes a long way.

"Yes, uh . . . I'd like some money. Uh, I mean I have a withdrawal slip. I just need the money for legal purposes. I like to keep my assets liquid, as liquid as possible. . . you know how it is. What was that! Oh, that bulb again. . ."

I felt everything slipping. My grasps on reality and fantasy were in serious jeopardy.

"Don't press any silent alarms!" How could I have said that?

My God, she's going for her gun.

"Don't shoot! Keep the money . . . go ahead . . . not the bulb again!" I ran out the door and down the street.

This whole thing was now out of hand and was bigger than we were. It had become apparent that there were some major interests involved here. Certain people were making sure that we would not succeed.

That night I read the warning on the package as I took a product containing Belladonna, a popular drug amongst inner-city laboratory animals.

"Do not operate heavy machinery after using." Too bad I thought, I was just about to go out and start up the ferris wheel.

Day 7

Based on brainwaves, my roommate has himself declared legally dead for tax purposes.

Things got pretty sketchy after that.

Last thing I remember was saying, "For some reason I feel like I'm in Spain."

I have no other recollection of this day.

Day 8

The little elves came today. They just came right in. Before we knew it they were all around. We were in a McDonald's at the time and we ran around the place warning everyone in sight about the killer elves that had migrated up from Uruguay.

Suddenly, just as it had started, it ended. All the elves were gone. We looked around and everyone was staring at us, so we smiled and walked out the door. As we walked down the street, they were all watching through the front window. Were we really acting that wierd.?

I felt this was a good time to sit down and re-evaluate our situation. My roommate felt that this was a good time to free-associate: "Upside-down fugus snorkeling antique before Fareignheit thimble tiptoes 18 shingles opaque Boll Weevels deoderant arbitration. . ."

"Get a grip on yourself," I said, "or you'll blow the whole caper."

I smiled and nodded at all the elves passing by.

Our condition cannot be easily described. Any and all judgment was questionable and our sense of priorities was detached. Here we were, at the make or break scene — two college students totally defaced listening to Led Zeppelin and watching a test pattern on channel 55. Yes, we had definitely become injured. We were now living a life in the break-down lane.

From somewhere inside I found the strength to crawl over to a text book that was under some empty cans of aerosal cheese. Three days until finals, damn. I started reading aloud from the text, my entire sentences gradually becoming single words.

My roommate grabbed the car keys and ran out the door, and I followed as soon as I was able. When I staggered up to the car, he was nowhere in sight. I then heard some mumbling from under the car. I looked and there he was, on his back, babbling and trying to insert a key into the chasis. He was now a casualty.

Day 9

Today everything disintegrated like a cheap suit. The last traces of sanity went pinwheeling over the horizon. The incredible details follow.

8:00 Alarm goes off.

8:01 Roommate throws Alfred E. Newman paperweight at alarm clock

8:01 Paperweight goes through television set.

8:04 Room is on fire.

8:12 I wake up to see roommate throwing baking soda everywhere.

8:20 Firemen arrive.

8:22 Roommate makes a sandwich.

8:23 I tell firemen I'm going to turn off power.

8:26 Firehoses turned on.

8:26 Massive electrical failure covers three city blocks.

8:28 I get the munchies and go to Pizza City.

8:30 Water heater blows taking out back wall.

8:32 Roommate leaves.

8:33 Police arrive.

8:38 Ambulance arrives, takes away raving manager.

8:52 Through the window at Pizza City I see roommate run by in charred clothes.

8:53 Police drive by in pursuit.

9:01 Roommate tells police he is Richard Pryor.

9:47 Apartment building burns down.

9:51 Rommate becomes incoherent and confesses to Lindberg kidnapping.

10:00 Calculus class starts.

10:36 Roommate booked on a variety of decency charges.

11:00 Calculus ends. I go to student union drinking heavily.

12:54 Roommate released from police custody posing as Dr. Forbes, self-proclaimed brain surgeon.

1:14 Roommate enters student union and approaches me.

1:15 "What about the fire?" I asked.

"Huh," says an obviously disturbed roommate.

"What about the fire?" I repeated.

"Oh, sure," and with that he sets fire to a couch.

1:18 I am apprehended by university authorities.

1:23 University authorities attacked with pressure hose by unknown person or persons.

1:44 We successfully flee scene. Roommate says, "This is insane; these people are dangerous!"

5:14 We cross state lines.

6:05-9:15 Record indecipherable. Something about Uncle Fester and needing large amounts of capital.

9:39 Set up camp off the interstate about 50 miles from the coast.

10:05 The funny animals arrive.

Day 10

We woke up in a laundramat in Rio De Janeiro. What in the hell had happened? I had thought that we would be covered for, but obviously this was not to be the case.

I have to close now, a large badly-dressed man named Guadalupe is after us for some unknown reason.

(Editor's note: The exams were held on days 11, 12, and 13. Neither Mr. Dorsey nor his roommate could be located. A subsequent letter received from his roommate conflicts with the original story, and ultimately places them at an all-night furniture showroom in Schenectady, New York. The two were last seen hopping a boxcar outside Four Points, Kansas.)



dream market

cold bars in an invisible night.
madwoman dances on the crest of a wave
lives among the shadows on the water
captive color in the storm.
truthless tomorrow.
she enters into darkness
a far-flung pigeon
a scent/a hint
head in a bag on the gallows of fear.
she stares thru the panes of her crystalline dungeon
searches for gods in her religion of war
how long she waits.
madwoman dances on the crest of a wave.
buried in dreams of chinese silk
her coffin is revenge in the grip of fame.
she chooses applause
and the cracking of whips.
she hides.
slave/not a sainted sacrificial flower
heroine of victims/creature of myth.
weathered vessel
sour wine.
she chokes on the knotted temptations of freedom
vanishes like a nightmare/forgotten in the morning.
lingering trace
angel of anger/hatred thrashing without a sound
she questions her comforts/her excuses/her needs
she dares not face the mirror.
merchant of fantasy
she gives herself no name.
she cannot break the mast
cannot rend the sail.
she sweeps the dragonfly from the surface of the pool
buys and sells her memories.
madwoman dances on the crest of a wave
breaks against the shore
breaks.
breaks skin with every smile
her portrait of love.
liquidation.

—Claudia Garren



| drawing by Mary E. Kimbrough

WHEN A FRIEND NEEDED ME

I'm sorry I wasn't there,
I didn't hear the things you couldn't say,
Didn't feel the pain you felt.
Last time I saw you,
I knew there was something unsaid,
But I was too caught up in things that
didn't matter.
You and I grew up alike,
Mothers who couldn't listen,
Fathers we couldn't talk to,
Unprepared for the time in which we lived.
How alone you must have felt for months,
No one to understand,
The baby or you.
I'm ready to listen,
Ready with a shoulder,
I'm here now.
Can you forgive me?

—Markee Jacobs

THE CAT: ON FOG

The fog creeps around my legs;
Beads of moisture collect upon my eyelashes.
I glare hotly through the suffocating cloth of it,
Knowing that white furry spot to be the sun.
I stretch and shake to dislodge that maddening grip,
Leering at the faceless, breathless body standing over
all the world.

It is colourless, featureless.
But I have life,
I have the colors of my mind,
I have feet and fangs and fortitude—
But it is easy to become lost in the nowhere of fog.

I practice silently following people who are helpless in
the ambiguity of the weather and their minds.
Precisely, scarcely breathing, I set my feet.
Heart pounding, I forget I am unseen and crouch against
a corner.

From behind, a clammy arm wraps around my head.
I lash out and hiss, sending a cloud of misty congealed
breath away into oblivion.

I watch, neck still prickling, as the cold, sweaty air
converges before my eyes.
A drop is formed, creating others and still others until
I am forced to flee the fury of the rain.

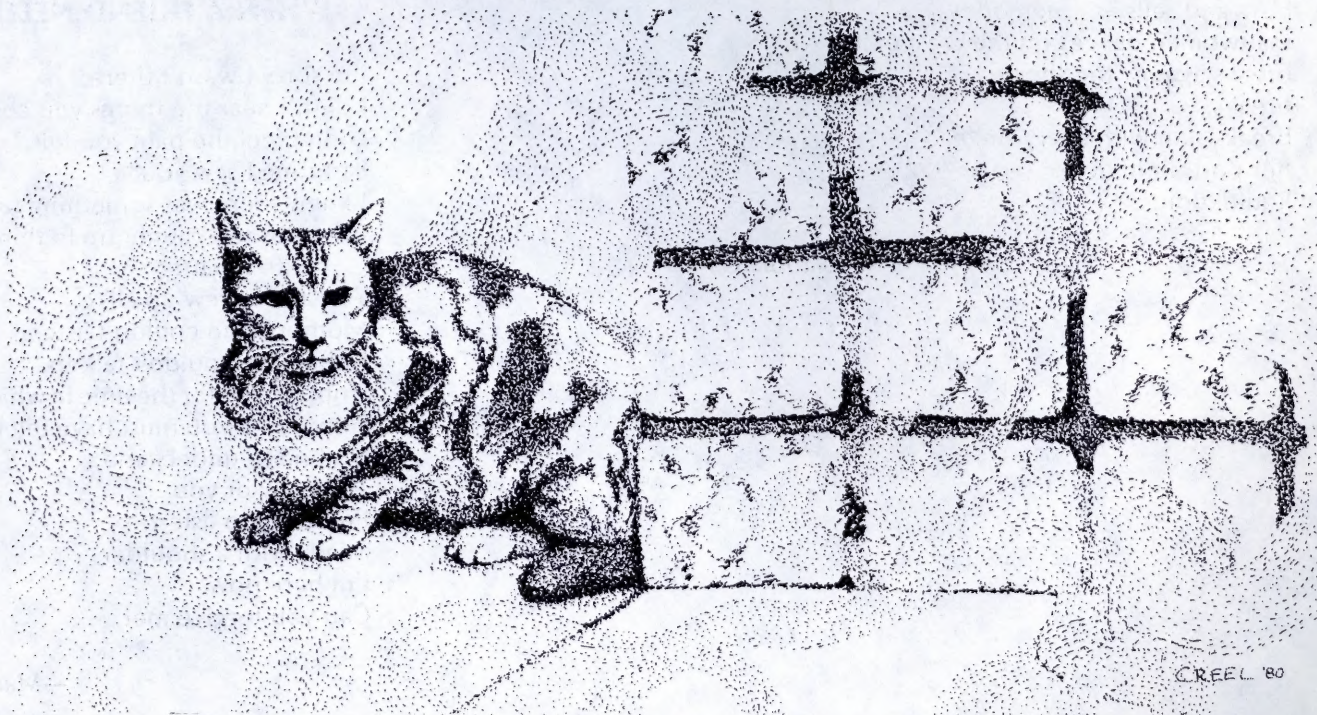
The sky winks blue. A shadow falls.
The shadow moves with me.
Lashing its tail, it joins me.
Together we roll and run and ruminate—
No fog can match the wisdom of a cat.

—Lisa W. Peacock

STRUGGLING

Struggling
Between what I want to be,
What I ought to be
And what I am.
The three seem indistinguishable
As I keep
Struggling
Between what is expected of me
And what I expect of myself.
Wondering
If I am
Achieving for the wrong reasons
Pleasing the wrong people
Aiming for the wrong goals.
Struggling
To be free
Of the obligations
The expectations
And my own reservations.
Struggling

—Beth Johnson



drawing by Candi Creel

